

EARTH DAY WRITING CONTEST 2012

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Tell us about a pressing environmental issue (i.e: global warming, renewable energy, urban sprawl, etc...) in your city. How would you go about addressing it?

In the documentary “An Inconvenient Truth”, former United States Vice President Al Gore educates people about the severity of the global warming. In the last couples of decades, we have seen the proliferation of new technologies that have made our living more comfortable, convenient, and connected. However, these advanced technologies, coupled with our consumerism culture, have also made the world less “green”, emitted greenhouse gases and pollution, and resulted in people’s bad health. To my mind, one of the most pressing environmental issues today is global warming. To prove my point, **this paper will examine global warming, its detrimental effects on Earth, how humans are responsible for the phenomenon, and what we can do to improve the situation.**

Global warming is the increase in the average temperature of the Earth’s atmosphere. The effects of global warming are truly dramatic. The melting of ice at the poles has caused the sea level to rise, which leads to the increasing occurrences of flooding to many parts of the world. My country, Vietnam, is one of those parts. Flooding happens in the central part of Vietnam every year. People here are typical of any other Vietnamese citizens. They are strong, resilient, and indomitable. However,

what they have suffered, the obstacles they have gone through are too much. During these floods, people lose houses and all of the money they have long saved after years of their hard work. But, perhaps, the greatest loss of all is the death of their loved ones. Their life is hard enough; global warming is making their life worse. Moreover, human-beings are not the only one suffering. Animals are too. Since trees are restlessly being cut down, countless animals are dying across the world they have to flee from their home and some become extinct. On a more personal level, I think we can all feel that the weather has been getting hotter year after year. I feel afraid to walk under the burning sun because the ozone layer has been severely depleted. I am afraid of breathing in the air because it is heavily polluted now. **Global warming, if not stopped, is detrimental to lives on Earth.**

Scientists are virtually certain that the main culprit of global warming is the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. Particularly in Vietnam, people who cannot afford cars ride their motorbikes wherever they want to go to everyday, leaving the streets in a state of constant traffic jam and pollution. According to a paper published by the Guardian, on average motorbikes emit 16 times more greenhouse gases than cars. However, in developing countries like Vietnam, car is a much more expensive alternative and the under-developed public transportation takes too much time. In these countries, people are also more worried about survival than they do environment. In addition, as the population grows and affluence spreads, people are using technologies and burning fossil fuels faster than ever. The growing population and consumerism culture means more burning of fossil fuels and more CO₂. **Also, deforestation means more CO₂ on the Earth's surface.** In Vietnam, there are many cases of people illegally cutting down trees to profit themselves. What they probably

do not understand or mean to ignore is that that trees convert our CO₂ into oxygen.

Thus humans are largely responsible for global warming.

So there must be something that we can do to stop or at least alleviate this phenomenon. One of the reasons why the Earth keeps getting warming is that people tend to think for themselves and care for their comfort rather than the “greenness” of the world. Therefore, the Government needs more policies to raise people’s awareness, such as including the solutions to global warming in textbooks or teaching plans so that young generations will realize the serious damage they have done to the environment and help improve the current environmental conditions. **Making the environment better requires the efforts of both the central Government and its citizens.** Being only a young individual in my country, I do not have a voice loud enough to be heard by everyone, but I try to do my small part by going to school by bus, and tell my family members to live greener- to use greener technologies and use just what we need instead of what we want. One day, I want to run a campaign with my peers to make people notice and realize the importance of keeping the Earth “green”.

In conclusion, **global warming presents a grave threat to lives on Earth. Humans are mostly accountable for this phenomenon and thus it is in our control make a difference.** In a study by James Flynn, a professor at the University of Otago, human beings are proven to be getting more intelligent, an unsurprising result given the progresses we have made. However, **if we- the increasingly intelligent people- fail to grasp the full extent of the damages we have done to the environment, global warming will be our downfall.** If we do not take actions now, the damages to our mother Earth may become irreversible at some point. Then what worth are technologies when humans have no place left to live?